

119 Old Road
Westport, Conn. 06880
(203) 255-4231

UNPUBLISHED MS.

February 23rd, 1975

Hon. Kenneth Gibson
Mayor, Newark, N.J.

Dear Mayor Gibson,

Your interest in seeing the material rising out of the abortive New York Sunday Times Magazine story that I described in my letter of February seventh is appreciated.

I don't expect that you will agree with everything in the accompanying manuscript. It represents about five weeks' research on the part of a writer who knew nothing about Newark except what he read in the newspapers. And magazines. Nobody gets to understand a city and its government in five weeks. Or maybe in five years. Fact, fiction and everything in between depend on observations that range from the true record to subjective impressions. I feel that I'm close to the mark in general. I think it's suggestive that a Dec. 14, 1974 article in The Nation by Daniel Gaby who is a hell of a lot closer to Newark than most journalists who have written about it contains many similarities to mine.

My case against Times editor Max Frankel is difficult to prove. It is the old story of august institutions that are virtually impervious to individual challenge. Yet my move in picketing The Times (at age 45 and in the vulnerable position of free-lance writer susceptible to blacklisting) wasn't made casually. Since mid-1964, I've been reporting about race and civil rights. Times Magazine articles--appearing before Frankel took over in 1973--include pieces on John Lewis and the Southern Movement, Adam Clayton Powell's Manhattan district, Ralph Abernathy, and construction union discrimination. There have been books, studies for the U.S. Civil Rights Commission and many other magazine articles. Over those years, I've developed a certain awareness about white editorial reactions to racial issues and a book of mine to be published next month by Howard University Press spells out in detail what this experience has been like. I say all this so that you may understand why I'm pressing this issue now--not out of personal aggrandizement (God knows, I no way come out a winner) but to smoke out the kind of editorial mind that masks new-style, acceptable racism behind an intellectualized, liberal facade.

Whatever your reaction, I would be glad to receive it.

Sincerely,

Paul Goodman

TO THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

Max Frankel

New York Sunday Times Magazine prints all the news that fits his prejudices. As a result, the Magazine is managing, not reporting, the news. Frankel, against the enthusiastic recommendations of his three top editors, refuses to publish an article about Newark and Mayor Gibson, because it does not reinforce his slanted, negative attitude about a city where minorities are a majority. The article which I wrote on an assignment covering a month of intensive research acknowledged that most of Newark's severe problems persist after more than four years of black-led administration. But it made a number of points that contradicted Frankel's version of reality. It showed that the city's deterioration started long before whites fled as blacks and Puerto Ricans began arriving in large numbers, that a reversal of that despairing trend may be in the offing and that racial tensions are diminishing. The article closely examined black-Hispanic relations and last Labor Day's Puerto Rican riot which Gibson handled in an enlightened manner, averting the kind of violence that nearly destroyed the city in 1967. Frankel arbitrarily dismissed all these points, singling out the riot description as "not belonging" in the story.

I make these charges aware that Frankel may accuse me of publicly cloaking personal disappointment at rejection in the robes of journalistic principle. This isn't the case. In the past, I've had half a dozen articles published in the Times Magazine. Two others were rejected. These rejections were accepted as an unpleasant but inevitable part of a trade where I've found both acceptance and rejection in magazines like Harper's, The Nation, Life and many others, in addition to publishing four books and having others refused.

This case is different. For too long, writers silenced by editors like Frankel--arrogant with power derived from institutions like The Times--have had to accept this kind of selective editing, which, when it is practiced in countries like Russia, is called censorship. Now, I want to try to get this issue of news management at a magazine of great influence out into the open.

Why did Frankel, in a memo bristling with animus that one editor found "incomprehensible," reject the Newark article? Let's see what kind of articles he has been printing. In 1974, out of approximately 250 Times Magazine articles, eight concerned blacks, none Hispanics. Three of the eight were about athletes. Of the remainder, a favorable profile of conservative Los Angeles Mayor Bradley mentioned Watts only in passing and explained virtually nothing about his handling of minority problems. A generally objective story on the De Funtis case (racial quotas allegedly influencing college admissions) was headlined: Discrimination to End Discrimination, an editorial conclusion which did not bother Frankel. Neither did a friendly story about George Wallace which contained one paragraph about his racial record, past and present.

Frankel's memo said that he could not find "500 words to justify the article's optimism." But the article wasn't optimistic. While it contained severe criticisms of the Gibson administration, it did not savage the city as many articles have done. Citizens ranging from white policemen to the black director of the Urban Coalition provided thousands of words of hard fact and opinion that showed a basis for hope under Gibson--crime reduction, new housing, lower taxes. Why does Max Frankel withhold these truths from the public? This is a question that the Times management should put to Frankel. The truths in my article speak for themselves. Now let Frankel explain his suppression of them.

Paul Good 119 Old Road Westport, Conn. (203) 255-4231

This article could begin:

Newark, as everyone knows, is a bad municipal joke. It is the prototype of everything horrible that's happened to America's big cities. It has the worst housing in the country, the highest (25 percent) welfare rate, Depression-era joblessness and more crime than you can shake a nightstick at. A city where minorities are a majority, it has a black mayor, Kenneth Gibson, who during nearly five years in office has been unable to clean up fire-gutted wreckage of the 1967 riots that took 23 lives, caused \$10 million property damage, and burned deep scars into the civic psyche. Under his "leadership," Newark has suffered the longest public housing rent strike and teachers' strike in the nation's history. When Puerto Ricans rioted over the last Labor Day weekend, they threw rocks into the Mayor's office window and accused his police force of brutality. Two died and fifty were injured. The injured were at the mercy of a single hospital providing ambulance service in a city of 400,000. Newark, with 70 percent of its population black or Spanish speaking, is dying proof that the nation's racially divided urban centers are ungovernable, unsalvageable and ultimately doomed.

Or the article could start:

Newark, America's third oldest major city, has passed through the crucible of racial crisis and near bankruptcy, and today is the living symbol of the truth that dedicated interracial leadership can forge a new urban reality. Problems shaped by history and directly inherited from corrupt past administrations still remain, exacerbated by the worsening national economy. But housing, however substandard, is integrated better than New York's or Chicago's, and would be much better if Nixon hadn't cruelly cut off public housing funds in 1973. Under Gibson, crime has been cut significantly and prohibitively high property taxes reduced.

P The new, hopeful look in city government was exemplified by the mayor's temperate handling of Puerto Rican riots three months ago which, compared with 1967, were as a black eye to a fractured skull. Instead of applying the lethal force that flamed the '67 riots, Gibson prudently dampened the fires of just protest with minimal personal tragedy and property loss. Today, Newark has a Puerto Rican deputy mayor, a Spanish-speaking judge and a black woman judge--all historic firsts in this industrial city whose racism goes back to pro-slavery bias when Abolitionists were attacked for hurting the Southern trade. A \$100 million housing and urban renewal program has just been announced. Blessed by one of America's greatest concentrations of air, sea and land transportation facilities, Newark is a multi-billion dollar financial and educational center on the eve of renaissance.

Well, write your own lead after you have read this piece. I confess that the limitations of journalism--spatial, partisan "balance," etc.--will not give you enough evidence to shape a fully-rounded opinion. Something like Newark is infinitely complex, mixing many levels of history, contemporary reality and future hope. Its inhabitants are the stuff of which Chinese boxmunkdrums are made: Puerto Rican racial problems within a black racial dilemma within a white urban society facing economic whammies within contending philosophical concepts of what city, state and federal government relationships should be. Etc.

Some of Newark's problems are particular: what do you do when your tax base shrinks \$3 million between 1969-74 while your close-to-the-bone budget jumps from \$163 million to \$231 million? The city shares universal problems with similar American cities: why are high schools graduating semi-literates, how can we stop crooks from hitting people over the head and taking their money? There is a common civic denominator of historic neglect. Mayor Gibson's color is significant in some ways, in others it fades compared with the colorless power of men in corporate offices, in in legislative and White houses.

As Newark goes its existential way, from day to day, trying to recover from grievous past wounds, requiring major surgery that our system cannot provide, the medium reporting on her sometimes gets to be the message. What ^(The city) ~~it~~ doesn't need, as it tries to convince people and industry that Newark is a ^{tolerable} ~~nice~~ place to live and make money, is the lugubrious, simplistic kind of ^(TV) ~~reportage~~ offered a few years ago by NBC's John Chancellor as he posed in a graveyard, solemnly announcing:

"It is cruel to say, but fair to say that some time during the 1960's, Newark died--it expired; but the death notice wasn't run in the papers...and so the people who live in this dead city may not know that it is dead. But they ^(do) ~~know~~ that something is terribly, fatally wrong with Newark."

For the visitor, a tour of the cemetery can begin with a 30¢ ride from Manhattan on Port Authority Trans Hudson (PATH) tubes. The railroad rockets out of sub-river tunnels into former meadowland on the fringe of Newark. John T. Cunningham, in his excellent popular history of Newark, describes how it was when a band of Puritans from Connecticut in 1666 approached "past the swaying marsh grasses on shore and on to where the bay narrowed into a river the natives called Passaic. Near water's edge, the marsh was blue with iris; in the hills beyond, white dogwood brightened the woodland...the Passaic River flowed wide and pure, edged by green marshlands in a manner to remind them of Connecticut."

Today, it looks like the end-product of an uglification project. Haphazard industrial development has created a dour landscape cluttered with oil tanks, discarded car tires, rundown factories, smokestacks belching defiance in the face of Clean Air Acts, and funereally black railroad bridges looming somehow ominous as if Charles Addams had engineered ^(by) ~~them~~ and the Pulaski Skyway from a giant erector set. A monumental garbage dump is whitened by thousands of seagulls who lunch

and then fly across the PATH tracks to drink in the industrially polluted waters of the Passaic which forms Newark's eastern border. Seagulls have strong stomachs.

To the north are undeveloped meadowlands. Once noted for legendary mosquitoes that flew the Hudson to feast on New Yorkers, they are undergoing a \$300 million sports complex development that can provide thousands of jobs for Newarkites. Glinting in the sky to the south, silver to gold, a 747 descends on Newark Airport with its smashing new terminal. Next door--literally--is Port Newark opening on New York's harbor, Port Newark with its out-of-the-past street names like Clipper, Oceana and Suez, but with the nation's most modern sealand containerized facilities. And commercial traffic volume that makes Big Sister New York uneasy.

Airport and seaport are big economic generators, tied in as they are to Newark's splendid East Coast and intracontinental highway system. But no blessing in Newark goes unmixed, and the ports epitomize a critical fact of Newark's fiscal life that means more than whether a mayor is black or white. Newark is too big for its britches. Among major cities, only Providence is slightly smaller ^{in area} but it has half Newark's population. A typical city like Louisville, with less population, is three times as big. One result is that squat Newark has a population density second only to vertical New York.

But more important even than size is what occupies the territory. Some 63 percent of the city's skimpy 24 square miles is off the tax rolls. Newark Airport occupies almost $\frac{1}{4}$ of Newark land yet pays no taxes. Admittedly, these ^(real estate) considerations are not so exciting as racism or corruption in the public/media mind. But they are the nuts and bolts of fiscal management. Newark's property tax rolls are exhausted although they must provide for services like public education. Some of the exhaustion comes from the abandonment of buildings by owners who can't pay the going rate of \$8.60 per \$100. Down from \$9.60 before Mayor Gibson,

it currently means that the owner of a \$30,000 property must pay around \$2500 a year in taxes! But there are thousands of properties that pay nothing--the ports, the land-grabbing highways, the regional state and federal court and office buildings, and the burgeoning downtown campuses of Rutgers, the Newark Colleges of Engineering, Dentistry and Medicine et al. This creates a fiscal bind unparalleled anywhere else in America and ^a particular ^{(irony in which} ~~particular~~ ~~the~~ the presence of higher education helps to cripple elementary education by depriving the city of tax ^(it's complex as hell.) dollars needed to support the schools. ~~Let's go on.~~

The PATD visitor enters Newark through its widely-ballyhooed Gateway Urban Renewal Complex. It's comprised of a motel, shopping mall and a big Western Electric office building. A splashy example of rejuvenation. But the long glass-enclosed corridor from station to mall presents hundreds of dirty panes and year-old ceiling tiles falling apart. For a booster hype, the initial impression isn't reassuring. The first shop is vacant, its windows papered over. In the lobby, there is a table-top mockup of the city designed to attract business. A cracked glass cover is patched with adhesive tape and half the wooden models are unpainted; it is the only booster mockup I've seen that itself looks in need of urban renewal. And a few steps away, the lobby's main advertising display is a big revolving cube adorned with drawings of four dozen happy-happy men and women. The terminal Display Inc. ad says: Buy an Advertisement surrounded by Beautiful People. In a city 70% minority, not one beautiful person in the drawing is black or Hispanic. Get ready for such anomalies. Newark is like that.

* * * * *

Newark is so compressed that a walk from the station through the downtown area reveals most of the city's strengths and weaknesses. Directly across from Gateway, Seton Hall is building a new law center which won't help property taxes but must be considered a municipal plus (although

a white senior in the temporary center tells me that in 3½ years he has seen no Puerto Rican students and the only black ones have come from outside Newark. This may help to explain why there are only four Puerto Rican lawyers in the entire state of New Jersey, a fact that Hispanics lay to the indifference of higher education authorities to minority needs).

A few blocks west on Broad Street, Newark's main drag, noontime streets are bustling but at a friendlier, less frenetic pace than New York. Crowds are basically black but heavily salted. The city's population doubles during workdays as virtually all-white suburbanites drive in to make a buck and take it home as fast as they can rev up their motors at night. For their convenience, the oasis of Military Park with its noble old Trinity Church (1791) and Cutron Borglum statue to the city's war dead has been defaced by a dozen kinks leading to the municipal underground garage. Workers sally forth to insurance companies with megaton economic clout like Prudential and Mutual Benefit, to three of New Jersey's four largest banks with \$4 billion in resources, to Bell Telephone and Public Service Electric and Gas. For an allegedly dead city, these buildings are opulent tombstones.

But a few blocks away, on the wrong side of the Lackawanna Rail Road tracks, civic death is in earnest at the high-rise Columbus Homes housing project. It has just come through a four-year-long rent strike and it looks like it has come through a war. Curtains stream out of hundreds of broken windows, glass glitters in barren courtyards where black and Puerto Rican children play, and criminal threat is so palpable that the project manager will not accompany a visitor inside the buildings until two security guards come along. With half the families on welfare, it is the worst public housing I've ever seen. But Newark's private housing for the poor is so bad that there is a waiting list of 7500 for ^{projects like} Columbus Homes. Something, obviously, is out of whack.

Back at Broad and Market, Newark's crossroads, the taste of Columbus is washed down at Murray's Bar, a 75-year-old landmark once renowned for its roast beef and posted baseball scores in the days when Charley Keller was earning the nickname King Kong as a Yankee farmhand with the Newark Bears. Then days is gone forever. A piano gathers dust, green paper streamers from a vanished St. Patrick's Day turn grey and the following conversation ensues between a white guy at the bar and a black guy he apparently knows who has just entered:

White guy: What, did you come in to get mugged?

Black guy: Yeah. I was down on Kulberry St. and they wouldn't mug me there right away. They said come back around two o'clock and I could get mugged.

White guy: You have to do it by appointment now.

Black guy: Right. So I came down here where they said I could get it right away. I'm ready.

A refreshing display of interracial bravado. But when the black guy leaves, the white guy turns to a white patron who has just announced he has moved from Newark and says: "Count your blessings. That bastard Gibson and them own the city now."

The attitude and atmosphere seem different a short stroll away at Barbara's Pen and Pencil across the street from ^{predominantly minority} Essex County Community College. Businessmen, off-duty cops and college staff lunch amicably side-by-side, Spanish, soul-talk and old-line Newarkese mingling in a pleasant, moderately prosperous environment. Plainclothesman Tony Novo, a former longshoreman handsome enough to have once tried Hollywood, says:

"The police situation is 100 percent better under Mayor Gibson. He has a department that can compete with any in the country. Before he came in, there was lots of political pressure in the department. Now, speaking for me, things can be done on merit. Don't get me wrong. He's

black and he has to help blacks. His new director, Hubert Williams, is black and he's really trying to do a job. The only racial problems are created by radical blacks and whites. You take something like the Puerto Rican riots, that's different. I don't think people should live like they have to live with roaches and everything. So all of a sudden they explode and a cop explodes and you have trouble. Gibson could've really crushed them. Instead, he went out and talked to the people. That took b___s."

At another table, Rolando Velasquez, is not so sanguine about City Hall. Son of a factory worker and a seamstress, Velasquez dropped out of school in the 9th grade as at least half of Newark's Puerto Rican students do, served in the Army and eventually resumed his education at Essex Community College--as hundreds of minority men and women are doing. Today, he is director of Hispanic Student Affairs there.

"The Mayor and his deputy mayor Ramon Fineses could do a lot more than they're doing," he says. "We have the worst educational system, the worst housing, and plenty of police racism. They could arm-twist more to change things but they don't. And in a lot of ways, we Puerto Ricans are our own worst enemies when it comes to politics. Our leadership gets divided into factions and bought off. But slowly we're starting to get things together. The problem is today with all the layoffs, most people are just worrying about survival--how to stay warm this winter, how to eat. Puerto Rican unemployment in Newark is running 35 percent so who the hell can afford to worry about City Hall."

Digesting these conversations, for what they may be worth, a Uvisitor continuing along Broad Street can do some eclectic window shopping and pick up some perspective in the process. Within one block, there are loafers in Florsheim's for \$43.95; loafers in El Mundo selling Calzados para toda la familia as low as \$17.99, and then La Isla where Zapatos hombres were selling for \$1.99 and women's shoes for 49¢. La Isla has

priced itself out of existence trying to supply the demands of Puerto Rican poverty; it is closed as so many Newark businesses have closed in recent years.

But a glance across Broad at another abandoned building with faded, old-fashioned signs reading, Central N. J. of New Jersey--Reading Lines--Baltimore & Ohio brings a reminder^{for} of historic economic forces that have been in action, forces that current conventional wisdom about Newark generally overlooks. Conventional wisdom says that Newark fell apart in the 50's because tens of thousands of uneducated Southern rural blacks flocked in, forcing the white middle class to seek greener, whiter suburban pastures. A partial truth.

But blacks, who used to inherit cast-off clothing from whites, inherited a cast-off city in Newark. Its decline was well-advanced when the ghettoized black population was inconsequential. Before the end of World War II between 1939 and 1939, its percentage of all New Jersey jobs had dropped from 20 to 11 percent. From 1939 to 1945--despite a World War II defense boom--Newark's budget fell from \$53 million to \$45 million, and property taxes rose while \$300 millions in assessed valuations vanished during those six years.

The advent of blacks and later of Puerto Ricans didn't do that. Complex forces--Newark's pinched geography among them--did. A 1944 planning report recited dilapidated schools, inadequate hospital service and housing where more than 30 percent of the dwellings were below "generally accepted minimum standards of health and decency." But about racial minority housing in particular:

"The main difficulty is the shortage of adequate accommodations for families. The white landlord seems to want this class of tenant at all, especially in any modern house, with the result that such overcrowding was unavoidable. In some instances improvised quarters have been found, and it has been our observation that when these people are given a better class of dwelling, their habits of living and cleanliness are improved."

The date of the report is 1917.

The point of all this excavation of the past is to make the present Newark situation more comprehensible as a process of time that can only be reversed by time. And effort, not a municipal drama where a mayor, black or white, can pull fiscal rabbits out of empty City Hall hats. It is a drama whose outcome depends on people like Gustav Meninburg, black president of the Greater Newark Urban Coalition. Meninburg is a rather late arrival (1955, in a city that is pretty parochial about its leadership. Athletic, suave, tough, egoistic and in his mid-40's, Meninburg manages to maintain good relations with almost everybody in the Newark class/racial spectrum. He produces, employing persuasion and threats, to get minorities into the economic mainstream.

He and the Coalition stopped construction of new Newark Airport facilities for 14 months to gain ^{jobs} ~~concessions~~ for minority workers and ^{for} ~~seven~~ of eleven new concessionaire spots. He is prepared to use the same tactics in the Meadowlands sports complex development. He probably ^{City of} ~~may~~ become mayor in the future, if he angles for it, but he doesn't give a damn about the history I've so seriously recorded.

"I don't believe much in a rehash of the past," he says. "I think the possibility of a present dramatic turn is very close. It will happen if the movers and shakers in Newark and Washington decide it should happen. If you use measurable standards, the life quality in Newark hasn't gone up under Gibson. One might assume it's a worse place, but I don't think that's true. The deterioration has stopped. Just by being black, he triggered a renewal of state and federal dollars that had been cut off. Those dollars haven't always been used effectively, but there is an attitude of hope that I can't over-emphasize.

"All this talk of the city dying is so much crap. The reality is that if Newark ever shit down, all those pretty suburban towns that

depend on it for jobs would go on welfare. People, with blacks in mind, say that Newark is an economic burden on the surrounding area when the reverse is true, here and in other urban-suburban situations. It is a regional center getting all of the deficits and few of the benefits of that position.

"So when you ask what has Gibson done, I have to reply that we elect^d him with such expectations that God himself couldn't have fulfilled. But I don't think that he has extracted as much from the business leaders as he could have. Psychologically, he sees himself as a leader of the people but not of the businessmen. It's true, he's been swamped with the mundane day-to-day stuff of keeping the city running. But I think businessmen would respond more if he leaned on them. His personality, no cynicism, is a liability and an asset. His placid calm personality is reassuring in a time of great confusion."

Gibson is an Alabama-born civil engineer who has been in charge of the Newark Housing Authority's basic engineering and ~~and~~ urban renewal projects before he defeated jail-bourne Hugh Addonizio in 1970. Addonizio on the New Jersey side had hastened Newark's historical decline by routing its corrupt traffic from the city's urban core. They thought that civic monkey business-as-usual could go on forever despite growing black awareness (Puerto Ricans were scarcely recognized in those days. In fact, ^{even} ~~then~~ this magazine did a Newark story in July, 1971, not a single Puerto Rican was interviewed). No short time before the lethal 1967 black riots, an ~~on~~ ^{outside} ~~city~~ ^{city} ~~leader~~ ^{leader}, Donald McIlwain, offered this memorable assessment:

"I expect the summer, as in the past, to be an active time with a good many demonstrations and incidents. Sit under good management, as in the past, Nevada will come through this time, very well." Famous last words.

A coalition of blacks and Puerto Ricans, galvanized by post-Blaxupriat
 Le Roi Jones turned black liberationist Imari ~~Imari~~ ^{Imari} Jones, powered
 Gibson's victory. Minorities, along with many whites fed up with past
 crookedness, and great, even extortionate expectations. During Gibson's
 first term, public attention kept focusing on Anthony Imperiale who
 organized the heavily Italian North Ward into a bastion of resistance
 to Gibson's effort to build a modest low cost housing development in
 the ward. It was to be called Kawaida Towers after Newark's black natio-
 alist temple.

Imperiale talked a tough, neo-racist line, built a community base
 by establishing a badly-needed ^{effectively} ~~suburban~~ ^{suburban} service, ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~area~~ ^{area}
 construction. This spring, Imperiale--now a state senator--ran against
 Gibson and lost ~~hardly~~. By then, Gibson had ~~after~~ ^{after} ~~from~~ ^{from} the
 bl ck-ruerto ~~down~~ coalition (which was a victory for problems ~~confronting~~
 into more traditional political waters. Practically, it worked as he
 picked up 17,000 white votes against 32,000 for Imperiale. But many
 blacks and Puerto Ricans were disillusioned. Puerto Ricans, in particular,
 were resentful of black patronage that generally left them on the
 outside looking in.

"There is virtually no communication between blacks and Puerto
 Ricans, and there never has been," Henningburg says. "The assumption that
 because both have liability of color there is some instinctive basis for
 co-operation is just not true. Blacks just getting jobs now have a
 reaction to their black and brown Hispanic brothers; where were they
 when we were out marching in the streets."

Henningburg's observation underlines a message cryoned on the front
 door of Newark City Hall ^{during the Labor Day riot} and still visible three months later. Next to
 a drawing of the Puerto Rican flag, it reads: "I hate City Hall."

Branch Brook Park is a long, lovely swath of greenery in a city liberally dotted with parks (Newark, its horrors aside, is topographically pleasing with hills and dales, and in many respects, a nice place in which to live). Just beyond the park looms the 100-foot-high granite towers of Sacred Heart Cathedral, a magnificent architectural wedding of Gothic solidity and thrust that would be a tourist magnet anywhere else in the country. A pretty place from which to view the Cathedral is the grassy shore of a lake in the center of the park where two small sculptured lions stand guard. Nearby is an oak tree. The grass beneath it is scarred, marking the spot where the Labor Day riot began with the burning of a police car.

Thousands of Puerto Ricans had gathered in the area on Sept. 1st, but not to celebrate Labor Day. Thirty five percent of Newark's Hispanics have no jobs. It was "el día del palo encendido," the day of the greased pole which young men climbed back in Puerto Rico to reap a prize from on top. This day they came out of the worn-out slums of the Central Ward, out of the prison-like projects for a day in the sun. Families picknicked on lechón asado and drank cold beer. The men shot craps in juergas a topos, the women gossiping, the kids enjoyed the unaccustomed feel of grass and earth under their feet. Near los cos leones, under the oak, an elderly man was frying bacaladitos and selling them without benefit of a vending license.

Into this rambunctious fiesta stormed two mounted Essex County--not Newark--policemen. Some authorities said they were intent on breaking up illegal gambling. Outlong-promise city and county reports have never emerged so their purpose remains uncertain. But it seems clear they came on in Coltsback style, knocking over the old man's stand, pirouetting their horses and in the process ^{trampling} ~~trampling~~ a mother and her small daughter. Her injuries were immediately reported and persisted--that the daughter had been killed and the crowd went after the police with stones and bottles.

When a squad car arrived, it was promptly burned. The first foot patrolmen were driven back by a missile barrage. They fired in tear gas, a black plainclothesman moving in the crowd lost his anonymity when someone spotted handcuffs dangling from his pocket. He was thrown down an embankment and stoned. The intervention of a Viet Nam veteran, Salvador Delonago, probably saved his life. Wilson, who says he was

"a little pero Jimenez growing up in black Newark schools where the kids used to kick my ass so bad I begged the teacher to let me out five minutes earlier to have a head start home," intervened.

"I begged them," he says, "I said, 'The man is living in the struggle as well as you' and they finally let him go."

As more police reinforcements arrived, discharging shotguns, Imperiale raced to the scene on his motorcycle along Central Avenue which bisects the park by the lake. Within minutes, his motorcycle, another patrol car and a fire department station wagon were in flames. Imperiale screamed at the police: "Shoot the motherf_____s." Mayor Gibson had arrived and he pleaded with the crowd through a bullhorn to disperse. At the same time, he stopped police from moving in.

"Where the hell are we going in this country if we don't stop these things " Imperiale told me later. "I went up to the mayor and called him a son of a bitch to his face. I jerkoff. I said, 'Take your ~~place~~ ^{place}, let's go in and clean 'em out. All the good family people have left. There's only troublemakers in there."

A line of police began advancing down a knoll, firing shotguns mostly in the air. Antonio Martinez, a 23-year-old roofer in the park with his wife, their son and daughter, and other members of the Martinez family, was looking for a 7-year-old niece Leslie who had become lost before the police started. A buckshot slug entered his chest above the heart and came out his back. He nearly died, was hospitalized

for 11 days and then presented a bill for \$400 which a city representative had promised him the city would pay. He threw the bill in a wastebasket. Martinez, who once lived eight doors down from Imperiale, voted for him in the last election and thinks blacks are too pushy, says: "We are always in the middle. If the blacks get in power, they can't care about us. The whites don't care about us. When my children are married and if I have the money, I would like to go back to Puerto Rico. I think about it all the time."

Most Puerto Rican critics of police behavior during the riots distinguish between black and white cops. Fernando Zembrana, an Hispanic leader who was on the scene, says:

"I saw black cops with a different attitude. They were worrying about what was happening. But I saw an ugly picture with many--not all, the Italian Captain Zizza a particular exception--white cops who were laughing at the people, very willing to go in and start shooting. I saw two Puerto Rican young men riding on bicycles single file and a patrol car came up behind them. The cop in the passenger seat leaned his shotgun barrel out the window and clubbed them off their bikes. Then they drove on. No arrests for any law violation. What I saw was police persecution. If I hadn't seen it, I wouldn't believe it. But you can't lay all that on Gibson. I don't think any urban mayor or his police director has more than 20 percent control over the force. Police are almost unmanageable. There are static cliques that predetermine how they will carry out the law. Here in Newark and elsewhere. If they're right, OK. But if they're wrong, like, in the park, Oh lord, we've got problems."

Mayor Gibson eventually convinced people to leave the park and rally at City Hall where the release of seven men arrested in the disturbances seemed to quiet things. Newark shuddered at the recollection of 1967 and then let out a cautious breath. But there was renewed rioting,

and on Seventh Avenue--"La Septima"--near the Columbus Jones there was selective arson and looting of a few predominantly Italian food shops. A crowd gathered at City Hall next day while Puerto Rican leaders and Baraka presented demands to Gibson. The mayor at first kept his tactical police force inside to avert a clash. But the crowd grew restive when no agreement was announced. It started stoning the building and rocks crunched through the windows of the mayor's office. He gave the order to clear the streets. The usually calm Gibson later got off an uncharacteristic one-liner when he said: "My door is open and I hope people will come through the door rather than through the window."

There was no levity on the street. Police--some of whom has been spat on and cursed out--used their clubs liberally. Some Puerto Ricans who had not even been part of the crowd were beaten. The bodies of two Hispanic men were found later, one beaten to death, the other shot. Police haven't yet explained how they died. Mayor Gibson issued a constitutionally questionable decree banning any gathering of more than three persons. Puerto Ricans were quick to note that if a white mayor had done the same during black demonstrations, he would have been denounced by whites as a racist oppressor.

Whether it was Gibson's decree, heavy rains sweeping the city, Hispanic forbearance, or a combination of all three, the rioting came almost as quickly as it had begun.

In its wake, Puerto Ricans at last began getting themselves together. In a Spanish emergency council (CEL) was formed, briefly led by Zamora, and demanded that the mayor create a bureau of Hispanic affairs. City Hall made a goodwill overture by assigning a secretary from the Neighborhood Youth Corps to assist CEL answering phones and the like. In a bureaucratic gaffe, it was assumed that because the woman had a Spanish surname she spoke the language. She was half-Italian, half-Portuguese and she didn't.

H&C is the first organization of its kind in Newark although an anti-poverty agency called FOCUS enjoys a good reputation in the Puerto Rican community for its role as unofficial ombudsman, directing Hispanics through bureaucratic mazes when they need help. A major problem for H&C is that there are few professionals or businessmen in the community with sufficient money and training to unite in establishing some kind of power base. H&C's present chairman, Antonio Perez, is a country furniture store dealer and funeral home operator who says:

"Unlike Cubans, Puerto Rican middle class professionals don't leave the island. Cubans bring resources but most Puerto Ricans come poor. Agencies give more priority to the more educated, experienced Cubans. We need technical assistance and the Small Business Administration with inadequate bi-lingual staff does nothing. Look at me. I'm afraid of poor people but to survive I started a funeral home."

Gonzalez, Trinidad ~~Bush~~, education director for the Puerto Rican Legal Defense and Education Fund, accuses the Newark business community of going through the motions when it comes to increasing Puerto Rican employment. But she reserves her greatest scorn for City Hall.

"We're tired," she complains, "Of being members of coalitions and then not getting a slice of the pie. Gibson has been dragging his feet on all our demands. We had to stage a school boycott this fall--the first time, incidentally, that Puerto Ricans ever did something like that--to stop the Board of Education from eliminating bi-lingual classes. He gave us no backing. Black-Puerto Rican relations are getting very tense."

The December indictment of 15 Puerto Ricans for alleged offenses during the riot with no subsequent findings against the police hasn't helped those relations. Deputy Mayor Añeses, a Gibson loyalist who says he "never saw a mayor as responsive to Puerto Ricans," admits:

"I am very worried about it. The community tells me it is not going to take it laying down. I know the mayor is doing everything he can."

But whoever did wrong on both sides has to be punished."

The complexity of Newark's problems are unending, almost unreal. Prof. Hilda Hidalgo, in a survey on Newark Puerto Ricans called, *¿Quié Se habla Español?*, suggests one cause of friction:

"Blacks do not seem to understand that 'Puertoricanness' supersedes race or color for the Puerto Ricans. The black culture as expressed by black Americans is as foreign to the majority of the Puerto Ricans as is the white Anglo Saxon culture. Blacks often are guilty of trying to force Puerto Ricans to give up their culture and adopt black American culture, at times forcing a rift between black Puerto Ricans and white Puerto Ricans."

That culture in Newark, according to her 1970 survey of 120 families, produced only a 33 percent turnout of eligible voters, 65 percent of fathers in unskilled occupations and 95 percent of families speaking only Spanish in the home. Seventy percent of children interviewed said teachers liked American children best. Sixty six percent of adults believe in spiritism and 53 percent in the mal de ojo or evil eye. These statistics, combined with a Puerto Rican character at once humble and emotional, do not constitute the stuff of which success is made in hardnose Newark. No matter who is mayor or what his color.

Prof. Hidalgo, chairperson of the Department of Community Development/Urban Studies at Rutgers's Livingston College, is bitter over Newark's educational system. With 12,000 Hispanic children in the system, only 137 graduate from high school last June. The figure was 103 in 1971, the high school dropout rate ~~was~~ ^{is} devastating 67 percent.

"Mostly white teachers with tenure and living out of the city are not committed to teaching," she says. "I know of teachers who put on TV soap operas in their classrooms and give up teaching totally. The principals know it, the parents know it and the children know it. Despite the odds against teaching ghetto kids, it can be done. If you

can't teach at least 75 percent of your students, then you shouldn't be teaching. It's very easy to blame the victim for your failure. These teachers trample the kids trying to get out at three o'clock.

"Gibson's appointments to the Board of Education are horrible. Second-rate people with no understanding, no vision, political hacks. I say this having backed Gibson the first time he ran and concerning now that in many ways he is the most able mayor the city ever had. But nobody runs the city systems anymore. With the help of the unions, they've acquired a life of their own. The police director doesn't control the police department, the school superintendent doesn't control the schools. And not only in Newark.

"I am the only Puerto Rican in the entire New Jersey educational system with a full professorship. But when I came here 10 years ago with a master's from Catholic University, an Anglo American friend had to sign for me to get a crummy apartment. Those attitudes persist. That's why Puerto Rican professionals have a responsibility to their community not to assimilate. They can't afford the ^{(between} ~~social~~ distinction ⁾ of those who have and those who have not. In Newark, I'm as much of a slob as the guy who lives in Columbus Homes."

Buffeted by all these social cross currents, Gibson is trying to run a city feeling the lash of a national recession and getting no support from a state legislature that refuses to pass a state income tax that would ease the financial burden of places like Newark. He remains unruffled, at least on the surface. Slimmed down by early morning jogs ^(in Jacqueline Park near the mayor's apartment) begun when he and Baraka were literally running together, Gibson is a compact, direct, informal man. He is both surprisingly conservative and outspokenly radical. Some samples:

On Newark businesses hiring minorities: "I don't think any company--Prudential, Bell Telephone, you name it--has enough blacks. I wouldn't give any of those guys downtown an A. But I don't think business is or should be interested in social service. Is it profitable to be here

or something else.² That's the criteria. Stockholders care about dividends, not social services."

On his handling of the riots- "Why should I legitimize complaints from people like Imperiale. Suppose he had been mayor. He would have had a bloodbath. No dollar value can be placed on human life. If there is ever a decision I have to make, whether to allow a police car to be destroyed or a human killed, I will always opt for the police car. I will let police car, Prudential, Bell Telephone and City Hall all go before killing someone. I don't play games about that."

On his Puerto Rican critics-"Puerto Ricans have nothing. It's terrible. But I don't believe we should create ethnic bureaus--Black, Portuguese, Polish, Italian etc. I've ~~made~~ ^{made} a number of Puerto Rican appointments with ^{out} anybody asking me. I'm looking for a Puerto Rican judge but I can't find one. I also don't believe in bilingual education. It's never worked. To take a child predominate in Spanish and keep him in a program predominate in Spanish is a dual-tracking system. The parents need bilingual programs for themselves. They want to maintain Spanish culture, they say I'm insensitive. They mean well, but they're hurting their kids. You have to throw them in the water and make them learn the language of the culture they're living in."

Gibson is a kind of municipal fundamentalist who believes a mayor's basic job is to see the streets are kept clean, fires are put out and there's a cop on the corner."

"I wasn't elected to create a new structure for black revolution and Third World activities," he says. "Baraka who's a brilliant, dedicated guy, wants Newark as a focal point for those things. That's not my job. But he and I are still closer than a lot of people think."

(These people include Baraka. Now committed to an alliance of Black Nationalism and Marxist-Leninism, he told me: ^{Gibson} "He is now a tool of big business, an enemy of the people. There might be some kind of catastrophe around which we might have to form a united front. But excepting such dire circumstances as that, we're going in different directions."

Gibson is adamant about a number of things over which ne---and other hard-pressed American mayors---nas little control. He wants a massive influx of federal housing dollars to undo and reco years of unmitigated high-rise public housing disasters. He wants a broad-based state income tax to end the pauperism of the Newark school system. he is against , civil servants living outside the city--particularly teachers and cops--where their life interests are not Newark interests and where they are beyond effective day-to-day administrative control of such things as absenteeism.

The mayor reserves his greatest ire for the Teachers Union which struck as his first term began over the basic issue of teacher refusal to perform monitoring duties before and after classes. ^{(They like} lining up kids in the halls, marching them in and out of school. Newark's educational system is just plain awful. Most children are two to three years behind in reading, truancy is rampant and heavy drugs are boring into 7th and 8th grade classes. Former Board of Education President Jesse Jacobs says:

"The Gibson administration appointed nine nitwits to the Board and then literally turned over the entire school system to the union."

Gibson agrees, at least as far as the union is concerned.

"The union talks about the failure of parents, their dis-interest," he says. "But parents like mine were poor and they didn't even know the teacher's name until report card time. But I knew if I didn't perform I wouldn't be promoted. Not today. There's social promotion. There's the abuse of the child by people being paid by City Hall to support the educational system."

"The superintendent of schools makes more than I do. (Ed. note: \$35,000). But he can't control the schools with the union situation. I can't control the Board of Education which is a separate, autonomous

agency. Our only control through the City Council is to vote against appropriations but when we do they always appeal to the state commissioner of education and they always win. I wish they'd give me the agencies to run.

"When I went to school here, and did something bad, teachers told me to come back at three and they watched while I did some cleaning work. No more. At three the teachers are gone, most of them out to the suburbs. We in Newark are like on some kind of reservation where people come in to make a dollar but don't want any controls. I'm a union member myself but many of our problems are caused by union featherbedding. One guy leaning against a truck and two guys helping him lean. We've gone way beyond protecting the rights of workers like teachers."

In his fifth year in office, Gibson feels that the black and white City Council never makes decisions on a purely racial basis and thinks that Newark's reputation as a racial hotbed is grossly exaggerated.

"I thought the system could be made to function here more easily than it does," he says, looking back over his municipality. "I thought if you just snip, this is right, it would be done. But it takes more time. I wasn't very adept at moving the Council. And the people expect things to move faster. They accuse you of copping out if you try to explain. The important thing is not to become a negative symbol like Boreas did with the Kawaida Towers. Which certainly should be built. When you become a negative symbol, you're a rallying point for every nut and his brother waving the American flag. I say, if you have a problem, stand up, salute the flag--and then work on the problem."

Gibson's homely, attractively old-fashioned view of things cuts no ice with Mrs. Carol A. Graves, Teacher's Union president who spent a total of five months in jail for contempt of court during the 70-71 strike.

"Gibson is a liar when he says he has no control over the schools," she says. "If you appoint someone to the Board of Education, don't tell me you can't control them. There's so much patronage and overt political involvement coming out of City Hall that you can't tell who's who in the schools from one day to the next."

"His nostalgic recollection of how schools used to be is relative. Times change. With diversions like TV, there isn't the compelling need for kids to pick up a book and read the word today, and their reading ability suffers. He says social promotions are out of hand but I don't see any statistics to back that up. When kids fail, the teacher is always to blame but most factors are outside the teacher's control. We don't get proper supplies, books are outdated, there's a high rate of student transiency and heavy language problems."

"Every new, so-called innovative reading program use urban schools as a guinea pig. We have 79 different reading programs more profit-motivated than anything else. Kids may do one or two years with one, then transfer and get another. Istar, Sullivan, Cirston. One they sing the A-B-C's, another they go Aa-Bb Cc-Kk, another use they sign language. How do you teach?"

Mrs. Groves is skeptical about the claim that some teachers lather kids' minds with TV soap operas. Most TV sets in urban schools, she says, were long ago ripped off.

"But the mayor and others cultivate the old stereotyped idea of teachers--spinsters who hung around school all day because they had nothing better to do. I went to teacher's college to earn more money than my parents did. Teaching is a job. From 8:30 to 3:15. I think it's grossly unfair to put us in a defensive position because we want to go home to our outside lives or because some live outside the city. I think if you want to live outside Newark, you should. That has no effect on your ability."

Mrs. Graves, who is black and lives in the South Ward, thinks money will determine the future of Newark's educational system.

"Money talks," she says. "That isn't just a cliché. It's the truth. I don't want to be a pessimist. I'll just be honest. Unless the economic picture in the entire country changes, the system at best will stay where it is now and at worst it will slide further down."

Housing, which Mayor Gibson also says is beyond his control, is a disaster whose dimensions would require a book to describe. In journalistic shorthand, it comes down to this: no new private housing construction in a city with a vacancy rate of only one percent; no public housing starts since 1968 and upkeep of available projects ranging from good to nightmarish.

The rent strike at Columbus and Stella Wright so cripples the Newark Housing Authority's cash flow that Public Service sued it for \$2 million in back utility bills. Window-glass replacement alone runs \$100,000. Rent strikers say their action was prompted by indifferent maintenance that made decent living impossible. "The Union says--if you can find them--claim that tenant abuses make the projects deteriorate faster than maintenance could keep up with them. . . . General truth seems to be that while some tenants unused to high-rise living and at war with society's wreck havoc on the buildings, city caretaking became careless as the color of public housing changed from predominantly white to black and brown.

At the 16-year-old Columbus Homes, manager Jesse Jacobs (the former director of education board) presides over a decay that has to be seen to be believed. Five hundred units are vacant, some boarded up, their doors sealed with wire lead to bar vandals and squatters. There are no squatter families in the buildings now, paying no rent, living in lofts.

Sometimes youths swing down on ropes from the roof into empty 12th floor apartments and do God knows what inside. With winter winds whipping through the project, nobody is repairing windows of bones shatters by rock-throwing kids. A lone workman is painting ^{over} ~~blue~~ the word "Zulu Nation" scrawled on the side of a building.

"This place is unreal," Jacobs says. "One of the rent strike leaders over \$300 in back rent. They're working out a deal to get the strike units out and supposed to repay over 51 months and then repairs are supposed to be made. Most of the elevators are so outdated that when they break you can't get parts even if you could pay for them.

"What I think is happening in Newark is to make housing so bad that blacks will move out and make their gutters conplace else. It's already happening. They're moving like it's going out of style into East Orange and Plainfield. At the same time, the city isn't building a darn thing on the open land in the old ghettos. It's being held off the market until whites decide to come back in and then you'll see some sweet deals made with developers."

Gibson discounts the theory and ^{(ary} ~~isclaiming~~ responsibility for the mess at Columbia. At the feeling persists that a mayor should have been able to do something about conditions over four years. He appoints five of the six housing commissioners. The present chairman of the bi-racial commission is Robert Votto, a cool, 42,000-a-year professional who prominently displays a congratulatory plaque on his office wall from Imperiale. Among new middle income projects on which CMA will spend 27 million is a 258-unit development sponsored by the Archdiocese of Newark.

"Technically the City Council could fix the Columbia windows," he says. "Actually, it doesn't have the money. Neither do we. We owe out over six-and-a-half million. We'll replace some to minimize heat loss since our oil costs are already up 300 percent. But the rest of repairs will be held in abeyance until firm agreement on back rent is reached.

get the same quality education as those in the suburbs. But I would like Ken to be more assertive, to start knocking some heads around in areas where he can get things done."

One such area is encouraging business to stay in Newark. Once Prudential provided 14,000 jobs; now they're down to 5175 and dropping. And Prudential is closing its Eastern Home Office on Washington St. (the company's richest) and establishing satellites in the virtually all-white suburbs, taking jobs where minorities are not welcome. This is the only one of its eight regional offices to quit an American city; others in place like Houston and Jacksonville do not even have satellites. Why is Prudential vacating an 18-story office building it occupied only nine years ago? Shouldn't there be some responsibility to a city where it was born and prospered over a hundred years?

"We started decentralizing in 1947 when all but 17 percent of our employees lived in Newark," he says. "Just the reverse is true now. But we have a responsibility to our policyholders. It costs more to remain in Newark than run it outside. Of course, our corporate headquarters stays here; just because the city has come on bad times it would not be appropriate to leave. But as costs go higher, we hear a point where the whole thing might go. Still, I'm cautiously optimistic. I know a minority middle class numbering about 15,000 is developing. But we must get more state and federal help."

Prudential's Newark work force is only 17.1 minority, up from 13 percent in 1970. Vice President Al DeMogatis, Newark-born former N.Y. Giants football star who heads Prudential's Community Affairs Department, explains:

"It's just a matter of time. I don't think you can change the ethnic mix of a business as soon as the mix of the city changes."

Well, the company has been there for a century and the city didn't become 70 percent minority overnight. Could there be a touch of racism at work

"I probably was the first Italian American executive hired by this company but that doesn't necessarily mean ^{it's anti-Italian,} ~~aggressive~~ he replies, smiling. "Our minority recruitment the first six months of this year ran 32.6 percent. But the high schools are so bad that the attrition rate on new hires is tremendous. We're working like hell with the mayor and others to upgrade schools. But I sense a lack of aggressiveness at City Hall although the time is ripe for action because there's a lot less divisiveness in Newark today. Now I think the mayor did make a good move appointing Police Director Williams. Any businessmen here will tell you that public safety is a primary issue."

Newark's 1600-man Police Department is mostly made up of white out-of-towners. Except for Williams, no top brass is black and there are only two blacks among 29 captains. Less than two percent of the force is Hispanic. As a result of a hiring suit by black officers, a federal judge ordered two hiring lists created and as vacancies occur, two appointees will come from the white list and one from the minority list. Patrolmen's Benevolent Association head Ronald Gasperinetti is appealing the decision, calling it "ridiculous and un-American."

Williams, a 12-year-veteran, doesn't agree. To begin with, he has serious reservations about the uniform statewide civil service police test.

"A guy from Sussex, Cape May or another of those little rural outposts doesn't have the same police functions as a cop here. So the tests need more urban flavor. I don't think the exam necessarily distinguishes between the capable and the incapable. You get a white guy appointed from the suburbs who doesn't have the feel of Newark, he comes in here and experiences cultural shock."

Piped-in music is playing somewhere as he talks, a first so far as my police station experience is concerned. It isn't soul. Just some doo-doo-doo girl harmony on "All the Way." Other cops says that Williams runs a relaxed but disciplined ship. One white cop confides that the words "sonic" and "nigger" are used freely by his comrades, but Williams thinks interracial relations on the force are relatively good. He concedes that some policemen may have over-reacted during the Labor Day crisis and says all complaints are being investigated.

"But you're playing Monday morning quarterback," he insists. "A cop out there is in an atmosphere threatening to his well-being and he will be supported if circumstances reasonably dictate use of force. We drew fire from both sides, Puerto Ricans saying we came down too hard, people like Imperiale saying we were too soft. I think that indicates we were doing something right. There's no doubt in my mind we have competent people with savvy. That's all the mayor wants. Otherwise, there's no interference from him.

"I see a lot of very positive things happening that don't get reported. I've got a public relations man and I'm getting on his case pronto. Census bureau statistics show a consistent drop in Newark crime since 1972. The mayor got federal money from the Safe Streets Act and there are a lot more foot patrols out. We're installing a \$20 million computer^{program} with the help of the High Impact Anti-Crime Program. We are turning things around."

Later, on a Saturday night, it's arranged that I ride with patrols in the high-crime South Precinct. In the precinct house, the Law Enforcement Code of Ethics on the wall says: "I will never act officiously or permit personal feelings, prejudices, animosities or friendships to influence my decisions." A ^{white} desk sergeant is on the phone checking out the bail for a minor theft.

"What's the bail for larceny?" he asks and pauses. "They're two white kids from Irvington."

The first patrol is with Sgt. Pete Buttris, a 20-year-veteran, and Ptl. Gene Posella, a cop for 10 years. Both are very happy to be Newark cops.

"I love it," the sergeant says. "I always wanted to be one, to be out helping people in the middle of things. It gives you a good, professional feeling."

"Exactly my feeling," says Posella. "We all consider ourselves brothers in this. Black or white, it makes no difference. Your brother is your brother."

It's a slow night in the South Precinct. A gas station stickup, a report of kids trying to open a parked tractor-trailer, a minor accident. Suddenly, the radio reports a black male with a gun in the lobby of a Broad St. building. We go whooping off. It's an exhilarating sensation, speeding in the night, cars giving way for you. It's easy to see how it can get in your blood. The report proves to be a false alarm. We cruise the Ironbound district, so-called because it lays between borders of railroad tracks. It's a working-class district of Italians, Portuguese and Eastern Europeans with some Puerto Ricans but few blacks.

"In all my years on homicide," the sergeant says, "I never had a Portuguese involved. In Portugal, they're trained to work hard and keep out of trouble."

Both men feel crime is getting under control and they seem genuinely pleased with Williams' performance although neither agrees with the court-ordered minority hiring plan. Police brutality?

"You don't go out trying to be a sadistic person," the sergeant says. "Sometimes they call you a motherf---er this or that, it's rough. But the race situation is calming down."

Later I ride with two younger cops, Patrolmen Mike Christy and Bruce Clark. Christy is big and burly, Clark has a mod moustache. They are laconic and lack the enthusiasm of Buttriss and Posella.

"I don't get much satisfaction in the work," Christy says. "You lock up the same person 8 or 9 times. It aggravates me. You go into court, wait around and they get off half the time."

black male
A ~~black male~~ is reported trying to steal a car in a parking lot. We come up as he's lifting out a battery.

"You got a registration on that car, pal?" Clark asks. The man has; it's his car.

Business is slow. I ask Christy about the terrible conditions in places like Columbus Homes.

"I had a friend there when it opened 16 years ago," Christy says. "It was mainly white then. I'd go to see him and the halls didn't smell of urine and the elevators were clean. I guess it's just the people."

An attempted break-in report brings a quick, professional response from the men. Guns drawn, they knock on an apartment door in a dilapidated house in a black block. An elderly black man, frail and trembling in baggy, worn pajamas opens it.

"Somebody was trying to force the door," he says, pointing to wood shavings on the floor. "See. He tried to jimmy it open."

The man doesn't know who it was.

"What should I do?" he asks.

"There's nothing you can do," one of the cops says. "If he comes back again, just make some noise."

We go back to the patrol car. The old man is looking at us from his window. If he comes back, just make some noise.

* * * *

How will the Newark story end? Beyond the tangible needs that the system can supply if it wants to, there are intangible requirements like peoples will to believe in themselves and their city. One day, in front of the Essex County courthouse on a hill overlooking Newark, I asked a meter maid for directions to the museum.

"You go down to the first traffic light," she said, "And then you turn left and go--" She stopped, looked inquiringly at me and said: "This is Newark, you know."

It was simply hard for her to believe anybody would want to go to a museum there. The 1967 riot had raged only a few blocks from where we today spoke and there is despair in abundance on those ghetto streets. But just down the block from the courthouse, where a magnificent Borglum statue of Lincoln offers symbolism for the taking, the new Essex County Community College is rising on 21 acres. By next summer, it will accomodate 7000 students. Edison Jackson, the school's black vice president, says:

"Our school has already touched and changed the lives of a lot of minority people who have been disenfranchised in many ways. We get whole families coming to learn. In five years, at least 1500 students have earned high school equivalency here. We care about our product--black, white, or Puerto Rican. In five years, we've taken perhaps 300 families off welfare rolls. That isn't so much in numbers but this is a necessary stage that can provide hope for the future. People have to have hope."

Is it advocacy journalism to hope along with them that the tragic story of Newark may yet have a humane and rewarding ending?